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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Summary record of the 15th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 29 August 2006, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Malmierca Diaz (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Cuba)

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In the absence of Mr. Hunte (Saint Lucia), Mr. Malmierca Diaz (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of officers

2. **The Chairman**, noting that the posts of Chairman and Rapporteur in the Bureau were vacant, proposed that the Committee should elect Mr. Anthony Bryan Severin (Saint Lucia) as Chairman and Mr. Bashar Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) as Rapporteur until regular elections were held in February 2007. He took it that the Special Committee wished to elect them by acclamation.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. **Mr. Okio** (Congo) welcomed the newly elected Chairman and Rapporteur.

5. **Mr. Severin** (Saint Lucia) thanked the Special Committee for the trust it had placed in him and said he welcomed its cooperation.

6. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) thanked the Special Committee and reaffirmed his dedication to it.

Holding a Pacific Regional Seminar in 2006

7. **The Chairman** said that the Bureau had established contacts with certain members of the Special Committee from the Pacific area to study the possibility of holding the seminar in November 2006.

8. **Mr. Kau** (Fiji) said that, after consultations among the countries of the Pacific region, Fiji had offered to host the seminar. His delegation would be able to confirm that invitation in writing within the next few days.

9. **The Chairman** said that the Committee took note of the information and that the funding necessary for the seminar was available from the Secretariat. To avoid the need to hold a formal meeting during the General Assembly, he suggested that the Committee should authorize the Chairman to initiate consultations with a view to accepting the invitation on behalf of the Committee. He also suggested that the Chairman should be given the authority to add two members to the official delegation to the seminar, one from the Asian Group and one from the African Group. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to those suggestions.

10. *It was so decided.*

Report on the session of the Economic and Social Council

11. **Mr. Benítez Versón** (Cuba) said that his delegation had coordinated the negotiations on the draft resolution entitled "Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations" at the 2006 session of the Economic and Social Council. A total of 19 countries had sponsored the draft resolution, eight more than had done in 2005. He noted that China, Belize and South Africa should be added to the list of sponsors. Under rule 72 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, non-members of the Council could sponsor Council resolutions, and he encouraged Committee members who had not done so to sponsor the draft resolution in the future.

12. Cuba, the Syrian Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had spoken during the general debate on the resolution. He encouraged more Committee members to speak when the issue was debated, in order to emphasize the importance of the issue.

13. As in previous years, the United States of America had called for a vote on the draft resolution. It had indicated that it would abstain because the United States Constitution held that only its federal authorities could make decisions on the participants of Non-Self-Governing Territories in United Nations activities. Speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, the European Union, Russia and Japan had noted that they would abstain as the issues covered in the resolution were beyond the competence of the Economic and Social Council. The draft resolution had been adopted by 29 votes to none, with 20 abstentions.

14. Most Committee members who were also members of the Council had voted in favour of the draft resolution and only one had abstained. Since all administering Powers members of the Council had abstained, it would be useful for the Committee to initiate a dialogue process with administering Powers and others, such as the European Union, in order to

continue raising awareness of the importance of the issue.

15. In an effort to garner additional support for the draft resolution, explicit mention of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) resolution 598 (XXX) of 2 July 2004 on the participation of associate members in the United Nations world conferences and special sessions had been removed. In introducing the draft resolution his delegation had encouraged the Council to follow the example of the General Assembly to take steps to enable associate members of regional economic commissions to participate in United Nations activities.

16. The Economic and Social Council had also considered the report of its Chairman on information requested of 35 specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system about their activities with regard to Non-Self-Governing Territories (E/2006/47). Only five had returned substantive replies, and three had replied that they were not carrying out any assistance programmes in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. He encouraged the Secretary-General and the Chairman of the Committee to establish direct contacts with the above-mentioned agencies and to send a joint letter highlighting the relevance and importance of the issue.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.